IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as shown below.

1. (original) A component adapted for operation at an elevated temperature, the component comprising:

a substrate material;

a thermal barrier coating disposed on the substrate material, the thermal barrier coating further comprising:

a layer of ceramic material;

a plurality of inclusions disposed below a free surface of the ceramic material; and

a crack extending from respective ones of the plurality of the inclusions to the free surface of the ceramic material.

2. (original) The component of claim 1, wherein the inclusions comprise a material having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than that of the ceramic material.

3. (original) The component of claim 1, wherein the inclusions comprise a respective plurality of voids.

4. (original) The component of claim 1, further comprising:

the substrate material comprises a superalloy material;

the ceramic material comprises one of the group of alumina, zirconia, yttria-stabilized zirconia, and magnesia-stabilized zirconia; and

wherein the inclusions comprises a material having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than that of the ceramic material and comprise one of the group of a polymer, ceramic, glass and metal material.

5. (original) The component of claim 1, wherein the inclusions comprise hollow spheres of material having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than that of the ceramic material.

6. (original) The component of claim 1, wherein the inclusions comprise a solid material having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than that of the ceramic material.

7. (original) A thermal barrier coating comprising:

a layer of a ceramic material having a free surface;

a plurality of inclusions disposed below the free surface of the layer of ceramic material;

a plurality of cracks extending from respective ones of the plurality of inclusions to the free surface.

8. (original) The thermal barrier coating of claim 7, wherein the inclusions comprise material having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than that of the ceramic material.

9. (original) The thermal barrier coating of claim 7, wherein the inclusions comprise a respective plurality of voids.

10. (original) The thermal barrier coating of claim 7, further comprising:

the ceramic material comprising one of the group of alumina, zirconia, yttria-stabilized zirconia, and magnesia-stabilized zirconia; and

the inclusions comprising a material having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than that of the ceramic material.

11. (original) The thermal barrier coating of claim 7, wherein the inclusions comprise a solid material having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than that of the ceramic material.

12. (original) The thermal barrier coating of claim 7, wherein the inclusions comprise a hollow material having a coefficient of thermal expansion greater than that of the ceramic material.

Claims 13-20 cancelled.

21. (new) A thermal barrier coating comprising:

a layer of a ceramic material having a free surface;

a plurality of stress relieving cracks extending from the free surface into the ceramic material, the cracks extending into respective voids disposed within the ceramic material below the free surface so that the cracks have no crack tip, the voids acting as respective crack arrestors within the ceramic material.

22. (new) A thermal barrier coating comprising a top free surface divided into segments defined by a plurality of cracks extending from the top free surface into the thermal barrier coating to respective crack-arresting inclusions disposed below the top free surface.

23. (new) The thermal barrier coating of claim 22, wherein the inclusions comprise voids.